



**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**50 CFR Part 622**

**[Docket No. 180212157-8897-01]**

**RIN 0648-BH72**

**Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Electronic Reporting for Federally Permitted Charter Vessels and Headboats in Gulf of Mexico Fisheries**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule; extension of comment period.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS extends the comment period on the proposed rule to implement management measures described in the Gulf For-hire Electronic Reporting Amendment, as prepared and submitted by the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council). The Gulf For-hire Reporting Amendment includes amendments to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (Reef Fish FMP) and the FMP for Coastal Migratory Pelagic (CMP) Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region (CMP FMP). On October 26, 2018, NMFS published a proposed rule to revise reporting requirements for charter

vessels and headboats (for-hire vessels) with a Federal charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf Reef Fish or Gulf CMP species. The purpose of the proposed rule is to increase and improve fisheries information collected from federally permitted for-hire vessels in the Gulf. The information is expected to improve recreational fisheries management of the for-hire component in the Gulf. The comment period on the proposed rule is extended through January 9, 2019. NMFS is extending the comment period to provide additional opportunities for interested parties to comment on the proposed rule.

**DATES:** The deadline for written comments on the proposed rule published on October 26, 2018 (83 FR 54069), is extended from November 26, 2018, to January 9, 2019.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments on the proposed rule, identified by "NOAA-NMFS-2018-0111," by either of the following methods:

- *Electronic submission:* Submit all electronic comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NMFS-2018-0111>, click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

- *Mail:* Submit all written comments to Rich Malinowski, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

*Instructions:* Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NMFS. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

Written comments regarding the burden-hour estimates or other aspects of the collection-of-information requirements contained in this proposed rule may be submitted to Adam Bailey, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, [adam.bailey@noaa.gov](mailto:adam.bailey@noaa.gov), or by email to [OIRA\\_Submission@omb.eop.gov](mailto:OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov), or fax to 202-395-5806.

Electronic copies of the Gulf For-hire Reporting Amendment may be obtained from [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) or the Southeast Regional Office website at

*[http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/gulf\\_fisheries/For-Hire Electronic Reporting/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/For-Hire Electronic Reporting/index.html)*.

The Gulf For-hire Reporting Amendment includes an environmental assessment, regulatory impact review, Regulatory Flexibility Act analysis, and fishery impact statement.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Rich Malinowski, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, telephone: 727-824-5305, or email: *rich.malinowski@noaa.gov*.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The CMP fishery in the Gulf is managed jointly under the CMP FMP by the Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council. The Gulf Council manages the reef fish fishery under the Reef Fish FMP. These FMPs are implemented by NMFS through regulations at 50 CFR part 622 under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

On October 26, 2018, NMFS published a proposed rule in the **Federal Register** that would implement management measures described in the Gulf For-hire Electronic Reporting Amendment (83 FR 54069). The proposed rule would revise reporting requirements for an owner or operator of a for-hire vessel with a Federal charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf Reef Fish or Gulf CMP species to submit an electronic fishing report for each fishing trip before

offloading fish from the vessel, using NMFS-approved hardware and software. The proposed rule would also require that a for-hire vessel owner or operator use NMFS-approved hardware and software with global positioning system capabilities that, at a minimum, archive vessel position data during a trip. Lastly, prior to departing for any trip, this proposed rule would require the owner or operator of a federally permitted charter vessel or headboat to notify NMFS and declare whether they are departing on a for-hire trip, or on another trip type. The purpose of the proposed rule is to increase and improve fisheries information collected from federally permitted for-hire vessels in the Gulf. The information is expected to improve recreational fisheries management of the for-hire component in the Gulf. The comment period on the proposed rule was previously announced to end on November 26, 2018.

On October 10, 2018, Hurricane Michael made landfall in the Florida panhandle. As a result of the substantial impacts that this hurricane caused to Gulf residents that may be interested in providing public comment on the proposed rule, NMFS is extending the proposed rule comment period to provide additional opportunities to comment on the proposed rule. Therefore, the comment period for the

proposed rule published on October 26, 2018, is extended through January 9, 2019.

Dated: November 14, 2018.

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